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RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 5204  
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ PRIORITY 1692  
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA PRIORITY 9897  
RUEHMU/AMEMBASSY MANAGUA PRIORITY 0990  
RUEHME/AMEMBASSY MEXICO PRIORITY 3591  
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY 0585  
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO PRIORITY 1764  
RUEHROV/AMEMBASSY VATICAN PRIORITY  
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RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA PRIORITY 0506

C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 000492

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [ELAB](#) [KDEM](#) [VE](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR DELIVERS IRAN DEMARCHE TO BRV MFA

REF: SECSTATE 19516

Classified By: Robert Downes, Political Counselor,  
for Reason 1.4(b).

¶1. (C) Ambassador delivered reftel points on Iran's nuclear program to Vice Foreign Minister for Asia, the Middle East and the Pacific Alcides Rondon on February 10. Rondon said the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (BRV) saw no evidence of non-peaceful purposes for Iran's nuclear program and characterized the BRV's support for Iran as a defense of sovereignty. Rondon, in fact, offered the BRV as a possible mediator with Iran in the ongoing dispute. (Note: He appeared to be serious, notwithstanding the BRV's IAEA vote clearly showed a bias toward Iran.) Rondon expressed hope that a compromise would be found soon that would preclude UNSC action.

¶2. (C) The Ambassador warned that Iran's non-transparent nuclear dealings and clear state sponsorship of international terrorism were reasons to suspect Iran's motives. While recognizing the sovereign right of the BRV to maintain relations with any government of its choosing, the Ambassador noted that open cooperation with Iran would naturally provoke heightened USG interest, especially were that cooperation to include a military element. Rondon reiterated Venezuela's condemnation of international terrorism, though acknowledging our two countries often differ on its definition. He cited as proof of his government's position Venezuela's collaboration with the USG several years ago, when Rondon headed Venezuela's counter-terrorist efforts in the Ministry of Interior, in investigating possible terrorist financing of al-Qaida in Margarita Island.

¶3. (C) Separately, and without prompting, Rondon volunteered that the BRV had not invited Hamas to visit Venezuela during its upcoming tour of the region. (Note: Multiple BRV spokespersons, including Vice President Rangel, have couched the potential Hamas visit in such terms. Rangel said he had no knowledge of a formal request to visit, but expressed willingness to receive any group that received the majority vote from its people.)

¶4. (C) Comment: We didn't expect to make any headway with the Bolivarians on this issue. President Hugo Chavez is in the driver's seat on Venezuelan-Iranian relations and has recently announced his intention to visit Teheran in the

coming weeks. This was a good opportunity, however, to meet with another Vice Foreign Minister apart from VFM for North America and International Organizations Mari Pili Hernandez, who is characteristically hostile toward Embassy officers. Rondon, a former brigadier general, was courteous and professional, even as he clearly toed the party line. (Perhaps Mari Pili could take diplomacy lessons from him.)

WHITAKER